

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 6

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 3

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 6— Relative to the 60th anniversary of the World War II invasion of the Island of Iwo Jima.

[Filed with Secretary of State February 17, 2005.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 6, Morrow. Military and veterans: World War II invasion of Iwo Jima.

This measure would commemorate the 60th anniversary of the World War II invasion of the Island of Iwo Jima, the day the United States Marine Corps and Navy landed on the fortified beaches of Iwo Jima in opposition to the Japanese Empire, and would urge the people of California to honor the men of the United States who fought and died in the bloodiest battle ever fought by the U.S. Marine Corps in the pursuit of freedom and a just peace.

WHEREAS, February 19, 2005, marks the 60th anniversary of the World War II invasion of the Island of Iwo Jima; and

WHEREAS, On February 19, 1945, 72,000 U.S. Marines assaulted heavily fortified Iwo Jima Island and engaged in the bloodiest battle the United States Marine Corps has ever fought. More than 6,000 Marines and 900 Navy Corpsmen and other Navy personnel were killed, and nearly 24,000 servicemen suffered casualties in the battle to seize air strips in support of the strategic air war against the Japanese Empire; and

WHEREAS, Major General Harry Schmidt lead the largest contingent of Marines ever to fight a battle. The 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions, supported by Force Troops units, provided the landing force, the United States Navy delivered powerful broadsides against the Japanese caves and pillboxes, and two squadrons of Marine F-4U Corsairs swept in low, unleashing rockets and machine gun bullets against the Rock Quarry; and

WHEREAS, When the Japanese army began the bloodiest bombardment the Marines ever suffered in the World War II, the Marines did not panic; the veterans in the ranks steadied the rookies, junior officers took over for fallen leaders, and shot-up units merged quickly to maintain the attack. A veteran Marine combat correspondent reported: "At Tarawa, Saipan, and Tinian, I saw Marines killed and wounded in a shocking manner, but I saw nothing like the ghastliness that hung over the Iwo beachhead"; and

WHEREAS, On the fourth day of the battle, Lieutenant Harold Schrier's combat patrol reached the top of Mount Suribachi and raised a 54-by-28 inch American flag. Several hours later a larger flag was erected,

and Associated Press photographer Joe Rosenthal immortalized the second flag-raising scene in the heralded picture that won the Pulitzer Prize and was reproduced around the world as a symbol of Marine fighting tenacity and skill during World War II. However, raising the flag represented only the “end of the beginning,” as the bloody battle would rage on without respite for another month; and

WHEREAS, Iwo Jima took such a toll on leaders that junior officers and enlisted men assumed roles of responsibility unimaginable in garrison. The ratio of 1.25 Marine casualties (killed, wounded, missing) for every Japanese killed was the highest in the war. It was the first and only time a Marine landing force suffered greater casualties than they inflicted on the defending garrison; and

WHEREAS, Major General Graves Erskine stated at the dedication of his 3rd Marine Division cemetery at Iwo Jima after the battle: “Victory was never in doubt. Its cost was. What was in doubt was whether there would be any of us left to dedicate our cemetery at the end, or whether the last Marine would die knocking out the last Japanese gunner.” Admiral Chester Nimitz’s accolade endured longest, now chiseled into the granite base of the enormous bronze statue of the Suribachi Marines and their faithful corpsman at Arlington Cemetery: “Uncommon valor was a common virtue...”; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly thereof concurring, That in recognition of the historic 60th Anniversary of the World War II invasion of the Island of Iwo Jima on February 19, 1945, the Legislature of the State of California recognizes and honors the thousands of veterans of the United States Marine Corps and Navy who served their country so valiantly and distinguished themselves above the call of duty, and recognizes the integral part they played in helping the Allies to victory in World War II; and be it further

Resolved, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution.